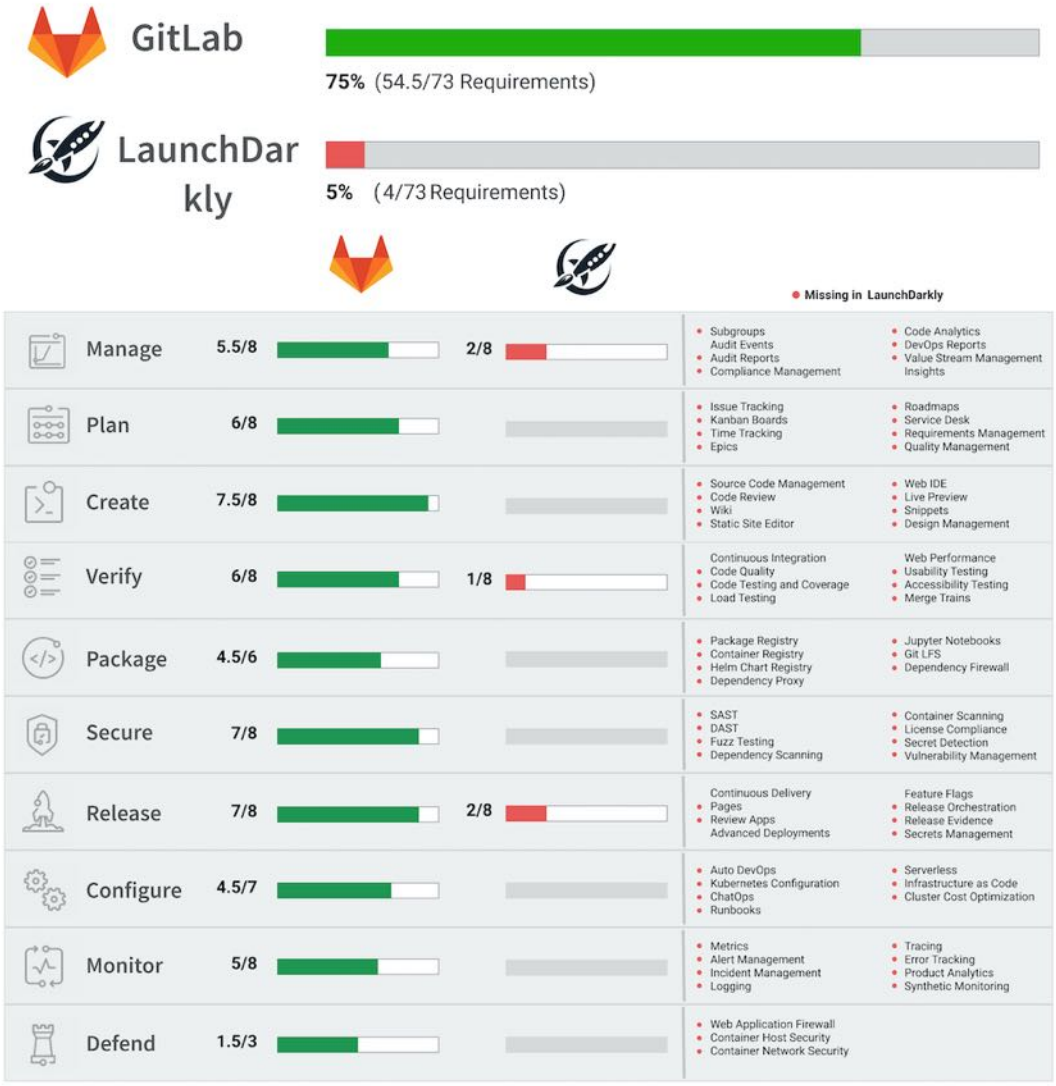
GitLab vs LaunchDarkly

Decision Kit



Summary

Launchdarkly is a feature delivery and feature management service offering. This means that the service they provide allows their customers to dynamically control when new features (within their application) become available to their end users. Launchdarkly's service offering represents a tool within the DevOps Toolchain that aligns within the Continuous Delivery (CD) tool category.

Strengths

Launchdarkly provides a very sophisticated feature management service that enables Development and Operations teams to deliver code faster with minimal risk by using feature flags to deploy code when they want while keeping new features hidden until product and marketing teams are ready to share. Their service allows customers to take full control of feature releases through:

-Fast feature delivery: separating code deployments from feature deliveries

-Incremental changes: controlling feature rollouts into predefined stages and slowly test the functionality within production before confirming it's safe to proceed to the next step

-Canary launches: rolling features out to a small number of users to assess the reaction of the overall system (also known as Percentage Releases)

-Dynamic feature control: coordinating and delegating release control to other teams in your organization, turning off features when they are causing performance issues or poor user experiences (feature kill switch), and retiring features.

-Automated feature delivery: setup scripts that automatically turn features off/on or adjust a flag's targeting rules based on metrics from Application Performance Management (APM) tools

-Analytics: providing deep insights across all features and how they are performing with Flag Insights; understanding how the application and team members are using LaunchDarkly.

Gaps

Launchdarkly is a niche solution that must be overlaid within a customer's existing DevOps Toolchain. Though they do provide more comprehensive feature flag configuration capabilities, they lack:

-A Holistic DevOps Solution: unable to meet customers complete DevOps needs with a single application Toolchain

-Reasonable/Economical pricing: high per-user price point for a single tool (Launchdarkly's pricing starts at $90/user for their lower tier plan, $390/user for their mid-tier plan and they don't offer a free base tier)

-Industry recognition: no industry recognition by research and advisory bodies such as Gartner and Forrester.

-Meeting/Phone Support: no option to request escalating a technical support inquiry to a troubleshooting call/meeting

Gitlab's DevOps Toolchain includes feature flags for feature management as Launchdarkly does. Unlike Launchdarkly, Gitlab's Toolchain offers deeper features/functionalities necessary for quickly delivering high quality applications and services for the entire software lifecycle in a single application. Examples of GitLab features/functionalities that are not offered by Launchdarkly include Source Code Management (SCM), Continuous Integration (CI) and Security Embedded within the DevOps workflow (DevSecOps).

Resources

Launchdarkly.com

Launchdarkly Pricing

Launchdarkly Wikipedia

Feature Comparison

FEATURES	LaunchDarkly	
Feature Flags CORE STARTER PREMIUM ULTIMATE FREE BRONZE SILVER GOLD This feature gives you the ability to configure and manage feature flags for your software directly in the product. Simply create a new feature flag, validate it using the simple API instructions in your software, and you have the ability to control the behavior of your software via the feature flag within GitLab itself. Feature Flag strategies can be set per environment . GitLab Feature Flags includes an API for interacting with them. Learn more about Feature Flags	✓	✓
Feature Flag List view CORE STARTER PREMIUM ULTIMATE FREE BRONZE SILVER GOLD This feature gives you the ability to view all the feature flags configured in a project. You can toggle the flags on or off directly from this page, and view all the associated information for a flag. This includes the strategies linked to the flag, the number or percent of users affected, and the environments. Learn more about Feature Flags	✓	✓
Percent of Users Strategy for Feature Flags CORE STARTER PREMIUM ULTIMATE FREE BRONZE SILVER GOLD		

You can select “Percent of Users” as a rollout strategy for your feature flags. This allows percentages to be set individually for each environment and each flag. When “Percent of Users” is configured and the flag is enabled, the feature will be shown to the configured percentage of logged-in users. This allows you to do controlled rollouts and monitor the behavior of the target environment to ensure the results are as expected.

Learn more about Percentage Rollout for Feature Flags


UserID Rollout Strategy for Feature Flags

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FREE BRONZE SILVER GOLD

You can choose “User ID” as a rollout strategy for your feature flags. The User ID strategy allows you to specify a comma-separated list of User IDs and then toggle a feature flag only for the specified users. This can allow you to target testing features with specific cohorts or segments of your userbase.

Learn more about UserID Rollout for Feature Flags


Set multiple strategies per environment

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You can define multiple strategies independent of environments via API and/or UI.

Learn more about setting Feature Flag strategies per environment


User List Strategy for Feature Flags

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You can choose “User List” as a rollout strategy for your feature flags. User lists can be reused for multiple feature flags while allowing you to manage them in a single location. You can create Feature Flag user lists from the API, and edit or delete them from the API or UI.

Learn more about setting Feature Flag strategies per environment


Associate Feature Flags with the issue(s) that is related to them

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You can create a link from the issue that introduced the feature flag to the feature flag itself. That relationship is visible in the feature flag details.

Learn more about linking related issues to feature flags